



July 27, 2005

Dear Community Friends:

Car-Related Crimes

I know you're looking at this title and thinking, "Again?!" Unfortunately, yes. We continue to see a high degree of car-related crimes in our neighborhoods. Auto theft, attempted auto theft, car prowling and car vandalism are still major concerns.

What You Can Do

- Before leaving your parked car, always remove the keys, roll up the windows and lock the car.
- Never leave valuables in your car. If you must, make sure that nothing of value is within plain view. Even pocket change is enough of an enticement to some thieves.
- If your stereo has a removable face, *always* take it off and take it with you when you leave. Don't forget to take your CDs or store them out of sight.
- Stow valuables *before* you park the car.
- Scan the area for suspicious persons before stowing items in your trunk.
- If possible, store your car in a closed and locked garage.
- If your car is stored in a carport or parked near your house, leave your exterior lights on throughout the night.
- Consider replacing the light fixture closest to your car with a motion detector unit. Motion detectors are good psychological deterrents since the normal assumption of a person seeing a light come on is that someone has seen them. Additionally, the light makes the prowler or thief more visible.
- If you park on the street, choose a well-lit, open space even, if it means adding additional street/yard lighting & trimming back trees/bushes that block your view of your vehicle.

Encouraging News

While car related crimes continue to be a problem, people are more aware of the problem and taking action. I just read a report where a

neighbor called 911 about a car prowling in progress. As a result of the alert and timely action of the caller - and her accurate description of the activity and the suspect - the suspect was arrested.

In another incident, a neighbor heard something unusual, looked outside, and saw two men attempting to break into his car. He yelled at them (something along the lines of "Hey! What are you doing?"). They fled. Just by making the men aware that someone had seen them was enough to deter them from continuing the crime. It is also important to note that in disrupting the crime, the neighbor did not directly confront the individuals and thereby place himself in potential danger.

Having an Impact

I share these examples to show that neighbors are having an impact on car-related crimes. You don't have to patrol the streets with flashlights or stay up all night looking out the window for potential bad guys. You can:

- Follow the car-related crime prevention tips. Share them with your neighbors.
- Call 911 when you see a crime in progress. Give the best description you can of the activity and those involved.
- Pay attention to what is going on around you. If you hear or see something that doesn't seem right, **safely** check it out and tell someone.

As a reminder, **Night Out Against Crime is Tuesday, August 2, 2005.** We are looking forward to getting out to as many of your Night Out events as we can

Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon
South Precinct Crime Prevention Coordinator